

REMARKS

Prior to examination, entry of the foregoing is respectfully requested.

Claims 7, 9, and 11-14 have been amended simply to delete multiple dependencies in the claims and correct claim dependencies. Minor amendments relating to matters of form only have also been made.

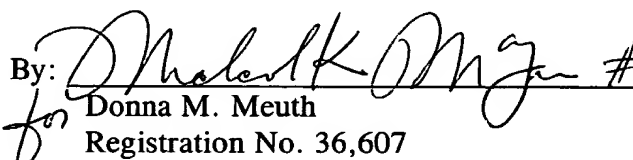
New claims 15-51 have been added, directed to preferred embodiments of the invention in view of the deletion of multiple dependent claims. Support for these additional claims may be found at the very least in original claims 1-14 and at page 19, lines 12-24. No new matter has been added.

In the event that there are any questions relating to this Preliminary Amendment, or to the application in general, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney at (508) 339-3684 concerning such questions so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Early and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested and believed to be in order.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 24, 2001

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated April 24, 2001

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Page 5, Paragraph Beginning at Line 15

The present invention also provides a plant in which said gene or said vector has been introduced or [an] a progeny thereof having the same property as said plant, or a tissue thereof.

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated April 24, 2001

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Page 5, Paragraph Beginning at Line 19

The present invention also provides a cut flower of the above plant or [an] a
progeny thereof.

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated April 24, 2001

Marked-up Claims 7, 9, and 11-14

7. (Amended) A vector comprising the gene according to claim 1 [any one of the claims 1 to 6].

9. (Amended) A protein encoded by the gene according to claim 1 [any one of claims 1 to 6].

11. (Amended) A plant in which the gene according to claim 1 [any one of claims 1 to 6 or the vector according to claim 7] has been introduced or a [an] progeny thereof having the same property as said plant, or a tissue thereof.

12. (Amended) A cut flower of the plant according to claim 11 or a [an] progeny thereof having the same property as said plant.

13. (Amended) A method of regulating the pH of vacuoles comprising introducing the gene according to claim 1 [any one of claims 1 to 6 or the vector according to claim 7] into a plant or plant cells and then allowing said gene to be expressed in said plant or plant cells.

14. (Amended) A method of controlling the flower color of a plant [plants] comprising introducing the gene according to claim 1 [any one of claims 1 to 6 or the vector according to claim 7] into a plant or plant cells and then allowing said gene to be expressed in said plant or plant cells.